

REMARKS

In a first amendment after final filed December 15, 2003 in response to the final Office Action dated September 16, 2003, applicants amended claim 9 to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, addressed the Examiner's drawing objections, and presented arguments traversing the prior art rejections of claims 1, 5-16, 18, 20-22, 24, 25, 33-38, 41 and 42.

During telephone conferences on January 13 and 15, 2004, the Examiner advised that an Advisory Action would be issued entering the first amendment after final for purposes of appeal. The Examiner further advised that the amendment after final overcomes the objections to the drawings and the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, but does not overcome the prior art rejections of claims 1, 5-16, 18, 20-22, 24, 25, 33-38, 41 and 42 set forth in the final Office Action. The Examiner further advised that claims 17 and 29-32 are allowed over the prior art of record and that claims 19, 23, 39, 40, 43 and 44 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of base claim 1.

By this second amendment after final, allowable claims 19 and 23 have been rewritten in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of base claim 1. Claims 39-40 and 43-44 depend on amended allowable claims 19 and 23,

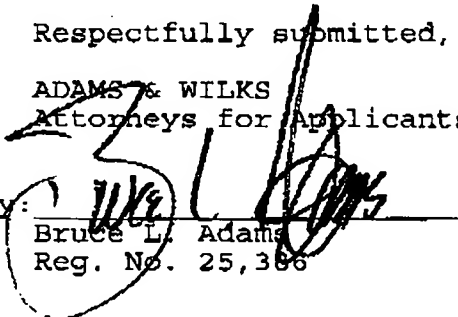
respectively, and, therefore, are also allowable. Claims 1-16, 18, 20-22, 24-28, 33-38, 41-42 and 45-48 have been canceled.

The amendment to the claims made herein does not raise new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. Instead, allowable claims 19 and 23 have been rewritten in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of base claim 1 and claims 1-16, 18, 20-22, 24-28, 33-38, 41-42 and 45-48 have been canceled, thereby placing the application in condition for allowance with claims 17, 19, 23, 29-32, 39, 40, 43 and 44.

In view of the foregoing amendments and discussion, and in view of the amendments and arguments presented in the first amendment after final filed December 15, 2003, the application is believed to be in allowable form. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the claims are most respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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